

BLUE GRASS BLADE

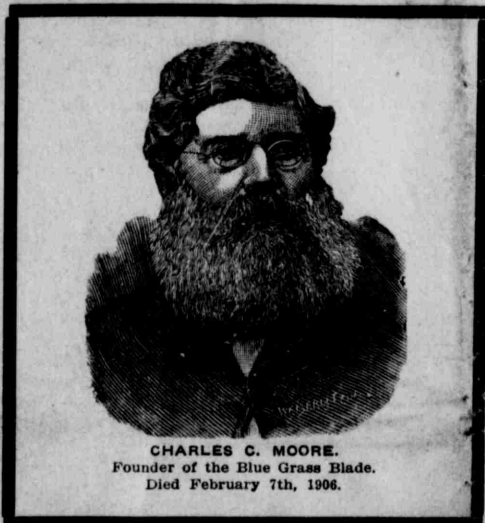
A. T. Parker
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WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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CHARLES C. MOORE.
Founder of the Blue Grass Blade.
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EDITORIAL

Brains are always trumps.

Idleness feasts while Industry starves.

Abuse is neither argument nor good policy.

We need a government that understands what America wants.

Political sovereignty united to industrial slavery is a dangerous compound.

If it were possible for every young man and woman to earn an honest and respectable living, more souls,—as we preachers call 'em—would be saved in a week than have been garnered by all the religionists from Jeremiah to Sam Jones.

There is more real love, more true divinity, more of everything that is good, beautiful and true, in the sweet message of a mother's lullaby to her child than in all the fabled messages from all the gods whose names are written in the pantheon.

What can man possibly know about God? All is speculation and guess work. The most industrious digging will not reveal the "foundations" of the earth; the most persistent star-gazing reveals but a few phosphorescent bubbles on the bosom of infinity's shoreless sea. Yet preachers continue to line their stomachs with fat poultry at other people's expense.

There are but two serious problems for American statesmen to solve beside which all other so-called problems vanish. Every able-bodied person who is able and willing to work should be accorded an opportunity to create wealth and earn an honest livelihood. After this there must be a more equitable distribution of the wealth thus created among the factors engaged in its production. In America these blessings can be won by peaceful evolution, unless the aristocracy of money with its corrupted

judiciary, its purchased legislators, do not drive a people to unreasoning madness. Under existing conditions those who toil are but fighting a hopeless battle already decided against them.

If Almighty God ever put up simple faith and superior intellect in the same package it must have been wrongfully labelled or got lost during the religious shuffle. They are absolutely opposing elements and as incapable of reconciliation as the doctrines of infinite love and infant damnation.

Did it ever occur to you that Christianity only teaches a man how to die if he is to inherit the golden streets of the New Jerusalem? What humanity needs is a creed to live by for men and women all know how to die. Christianity is a coffin. Freethought is a cradle. Liberty finds a place in both.

When one thinks that heaven is to be populated with thousands of immaculate bricks all from the same mold, he ought to feel grateful that there is neither marrying or giving in marriage in the New Jerusalem. Such a belief is calculated to make many a man strive to obtain a misuse on his baptism and even go fishing on Sunday.

This may be an age of progress, but the orthodox devil, more malignant than the kind printer's employ, is leading us a wild dance through unprofitable deserts. While rationalists have been shattering ethnic cults, he has been building new idols for human worship. The golden calf of ancient Israel has reached maturity and maternity and its progeny is now worshipped in every church in America.

When legislatures truckle to the plutocrat and enact laws for a few religious non-entities they do but throw out a challenge to human destiny. It is the flaunting of a red blanket in the face of an infuriated bovine, a mockery of the Industrial Samson by the foolish Philistines as he stands blind and desperate with his arms of brawn and sinew encircling our political temple. They do but transform the constitution of our republic into an instrument of oppression, make of it a tool for tyranny.

THE BLADE IS HERE TO STAY.

When the Blade was first received since assuming the editorial management of the Blade, we are convinced that many subscriptions have been held back because of a belief that the Blade would cease publication in the event of Mr. Moore's death. Some have very frankly given expression to such opinions and the tenor of many letters addressed to us impels us to form these conclusions.

There were reasons why such a belief should be entertained. The Blade has been suspended several times and it was natural for some to expect a suspension to follow the demise of our late lamented editor.

It was never the intention of the many friends of this paper, including myself, to allow it to sink into oblivion and when it became certain that Mr. Moore's end was approaching, conferences were held to decide upon a successor to him. For myself, I preferred that Dr. Wilson should edit the Blade and urged his acceptance of the duties. Unfortunately, for the Blade, his large practice made it impossible for him to accept, and a unanimous decision was made that I should become editor as well as publisher. It was not without misgiving that I finally agreed to accept, so I rolled up my sleeves and went to work. Our readers have seen the result.

Now, candidly, does the Blade look like it is going to suspend? Well, it isn't. Not by any means. The Blade will come out once each week, better and stronger with each succeeding issue, if that be possible, and these few words are written to encourage its friends to find new readers for its pages.

The renewals that are now being made inspire us with hope and we have every reason to believe that before 1906 has passed away, we shall be able to boast a larger circulation than all Freethought papers in America combined. This is no idle boast. We mean it. But we need the help of every subscriber to win. Now pull yourselves together. The Blade is here to stay. Send in all the subscribers you can get.

LENT.

For the past month the ultra-fashionable have clothed themselves in the proverbial sack-cloth and covered themselves with ashes, in a sort of penitential mood, and the period of solemn farce is to continue for another two weeks. After this comes the crash of cymbals and the rhythmic pulse of dancing feet. During Lent the fiddle is hushed as though it were another Pied Piper to lure souls to hell. Safely o'er the penance society indulges in an excess of pleasures to make up for lost time.

Why is all this? What is Lent? Why do apparently sensible men and women refrain from harmless pleasures and healthful recreation during this six weeks of every spring? Simply from a desire to conform to the demands made upon them by the ritualistic orthodoxes of the day. Even those denominations which declaim against ritualism try to appear as ritualistic as possible during this season in order to appear in the ordained fashion. Poor preterists, they have their faces still turned to-

wards the dead past and cannot see the white light of liberty shining athwart the mountain tops of progress.

The Lenten period is fixed at forty days, preceding the Easter festival, and is designated as a period of fasting, penitence, religious devotion, prayer, and an abstinence from pleasures, to conform as near as possible to the alleged fasting of Christ in the wilderness. Even as the Galilean is said to have successfully resisted temptation, so is humanity directed to guard against temptation that comes from the world. To resist temptation that comes from the world is commendable at all times and should be as consistently practiced out of Lent as in it. Time expended in social pleasures is not really wasted. Yet there be few Davids in the modern Israel and no Goliaths of Gath that the preachers have gone to stoning sheep.

We are told that at the end of Christ's fast in the wilderness he was sorely tempted of the devil. By whom, did you say? The devil. And who, and what is the devil? The evil one, to be sure, he, who God created tempt man and led him to the outer darkness. How did the Evil One try to tempt Christ? By commanding him to make bread from stones, if he really be the son of God. Did the devil know Christ was God? He did. Then did not the devil know that it was useless for him to try to tempt God? Well,—er,—you see,—er—that is,—er,—you know,—er,—but D—n it, what's the use?

While this is a fair sample of Christian argument it will demonstrate the absurdity of the entire story. Imagine, readers, that the creature should try to tempt the creator. What a sublime farce! Of what value to man is the lesson here obtained? It were useless to ask Christ to make bread of stones for both must have known that at the best they were only playing a game of bluff. Both were four-flushing but the preachers have raked in the flesh pots on the game ever since. Such a comedy makes a blighting thunderbolt of the star of Bethlehem. As the whole is greater than a part, so is it much wiser, and it is to the eternal credit of the race that it has evolved beyond that stage wherein it can give blind credence to such Munchausenisms.

The next step in this "game of the gods" is even more farcical than the one mentioned. Failing to induce Christ to obey him by making bread, the

devil, we are told, took him to the top of an "abiding high mountain" and showed "all the kingdoms of the world" and told him that all he saved here his, provided he would fall down and worship him. Well, let us see. In the first place geographers have failed to locate any "abiding high mountain" in all Judea, and though the land were covered with mountains higher by far than the Himalayas, common sense will prove that Christ could not have been shown many "kingdoms" from the tops thereof. Were such the case, is it not a fact, that according to Christian theology, the devil never owned these kingdoms? That they were not his to bestow? That these kingdoms already belonged to Christ, were his because he made them? If you answer in the affirmative, how, and in what manner was Christ tempted in this instance?

It may be that our bump of veneration is not so abnormal that it wears holes in the steeple crown of our head-gear, and there may be something radically wrong with our baptism, but we assert that such idle stories are foul and damning blasphemies against the deity they profess to worship, and they who preach them as veritable truths should be induced to apply a cast iron muzzle and then succeed in losing the key.

REPEAL THE SUNDAY LAW!

Four times in each and every year the Puritanical Sabbatharian law of the Commonwealth of Kentucky is placed in evidence, not by the good it is capable of working, but by reason of indictments found by grand juries against liquor dealers for selling their wares on Sunday. The Blades makes no reference to this subject upon the hypothesis that liquor selling on Sunday is right or wrong, as a matter of fact we are not discussing that feature, but to direct attention to the fact that there is a law handed down to us by the Puritans of New England which ought to have been abrogated long ago.

The law, in effect, that no manner of labor shall be performed on Sunday, except labor that is of charity or necessity, and divers punishments are imposed by statute for its violation. Hence, while liquor men are indicted for plying their trade on Sunday, men are indicted for "charity or necessity" yet, the preacher, who labors on no other day, is permitted to practice his profession of peddling saving grace by the yard for pay, which is of doubtful charity or necessity in any case.

Naturally enough the preachers back up the grand juries and approve the finding of the indictments, realizing that in the distinction of Sabbath observance, now enforced by the church is compelled to loosen its grip upon the people and the people gradually, but surely drift away from them and their baneful influence. The preachers proceed to argue that the habit of working too much, thereby evil on society, and that without legal compulsion of restraint, they will not seek the se which their exhausted natures demand. The

tion that men may obtain "repose" even in church on the Sabbath, for he usually sleeps while the preacher talks, unless the preacher talks too loud for the purpose of keeping him awake.

Such an argument is error, plain, palpable and serious error, and inconsistent with human experience. It is flatly contradicted by the history of the past and the observations of the present. In all ages there have been protests, declamations and reproaches against the vice of idleness, but the Blade has yet to learn that there has been any general complaint against an intemperate, or morbid industry. The natural influences of self-preservation will compel man to seek cessation from toil as certainly as he will seek slumber, relief from pain, or food to appease his hunger. The truth is, however much it may be disguised by the insidious hand of priestcraft, this "one day of rest notion" is purely a religious idea. It is probably derived from the Sabbathical institutions of the ancient Hebrews, and from time to time it has been adopted into the creeds, and given a supposed divine sanction, by all the succeeding religious cults. The Christian Sunday is on no higher moral plane than the Friday of the Mohammedan or the Saturday of the Israelite.

The people of Lexington, however, were furnished with a practical test of the impotency of a Sunday law when contrary to the will of the community. Lexington is favored with a Mayor of moral and political back-bone and grit. The Blade does not know what his religious pretensions are, or if he has any. It does know that he is a sturdy type of American manhood and is of that rugged mold which dares to do when he believes he is right. Some time ago a demand was made upon him that the Sunday law of the State be enforced in Lexington, and those making the demand insisted that he was making no effort to enforce it. He thereupon proceeded to give them a taste of what the enforcement of such a law would mean. He immediately ordered every form of business to cease after 12 o'clock, midnight, Saturday, the cessation to continue until after midnight Sunday. Milk wagons were stopped, newspapers notified that they would be arrested if their papers were sold on the streets, restaurants, drug-stores, everything, except which by necessity or charity had to be opened, was placed under the general order of inhibition.

Now came a growl like a lion's roar. Men refused to submit. Arrests were made. The newspapers got out injunctions. The orthodox sauce was too rich for the heterodox goose. A practical demonstration was given of the utter folly of such a law and the effort to enforce it proved an arrogant farce. The Mayor was called before grand juries. He was threatened with indictment for malfeasance or misfeasance in office. He invited it in order to furnish a test. The grand jury quailed before the Titan and the farce was complete.

Next came the barbers, who, through organized effort sought to invoke the aid of the State law to close up competitors on Sunday. It, too, failed. Arrests were made but to no purpose. Some of the barbers closed up for a brief period, but now all are open on Sunday.

The truth is every Sunday law is an infringement upon the liberty of the citizen. It seeks to establish a compulsory religious observance and is a discrimination between different religious systems. It is not a matter of human expediency but a direct usurpation of political power by a well organized, but tyrannical minority over the unorganized majority. As a general rule that citizen, who is most fearful lest the Christian Sabbath be desecrated is the one who needs the most watching in trade. He would willingly employ the jails of the country to propagate the Christian religion and force all men on his particular heavenly turnpike with a policeman's club. What honor can be gained by throwing an American citizen into jail for simply shaving another American citizen on Sunday? What crime has been committed against either God or man by the sale of a cigar on Sunday? Yet it appears that the Kentucky legislature, as indeed, with other states, has allowed the preachers and the coterie of unclean harpies that hang on their coat-tails to befuddle them with the notion that they are in duty bound to guard both the spiritual and temporal welfare of the citizen,—that they have been duly ordained to administer the government of both God and man.

Any religion that must rely on secular law is inherently rotten and weak. Any religion which must appeal to brute force to secure respect is unworthy the devotion of a mangy canine. If the Christian religion is not strong enough to stand, upon its merits, let it die.

TOUCHED THE RIGHT SPOT.

The following from the pen of J. D. Shaw, which appeared in the current issue of "The Searchlight" has pleased us beyond measure. Coming from such a source, every reader of the Blade should now feel doubly assured of our success:

"Mr. James E. Hughes, is making quite a success of the Blue Grass Blade now under his control. By many it was predicted that the death of Mr. Moore would soon be followed by the suspension of the Blade. A careful perusal of the four numbers that have appeared under the sole management of Mr. Hughes encourages the belief that it will live long and accomplish great good."